

CLAIMS

1. A shell (12;14) for an ankle brace (10), the shell being semi-rigid and having an inner surface shaped to conform to a side surface of a person's leg (18) between an upper extent (56;62) above the person's ankle bone (26;30) and a lower extent (40;50) below the person's ankle bone but above the base of the heel (22), and between a forward extent (32,36;42,46) 5 towards the front of the person's leg and a rearward extent (34,38;44,48) towards the rear of the person's leg, the shell having a portion (24;28) shaped to register the shell with respect to the person's ankle bone, and the shell being bifurcated by a slot (55;60) extending from the upper extent towards the registration portion.
2. A shell as claimed in claim 1, wherein the width of the slot above the registration 10 portion is at least 5 mm.
3. A shell as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the width of the slot above the registration portion is at most 30 mm.
4. A shell as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the registration portion is provided by a hole (24;28) for snugly receiving the protruding part of the ankle bone.
- 15 5. A shell as claimed in claim 4, wherein the slot opens into the hole.
6. A shell as claimed in claim 4, wherein the slot stops short of the hole.
7. A shell as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the registration portion is provided by a recess in the inner surface of the shell for receiving the protruding part of the ankle bone.
8. A shell as claimed in claim 7, wherein the slot stops short of the recess.
- 20 9. A shell as claimed in claim 7, wherein the slot extends as far as the recess.
10. A shell as claimed in claim 7, wherein the slot extends at least partly into the recess.
11. A shell as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the registration portion has a non-circular outline.
12. A shell as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the shell has a generally uniform 25 thickness.

13. A shell as claimed in any preceding claim, in combination with means (16,20) for adjustably strapping the shell to the person's leg.
14. A shell as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the shell is devoid of any feature extending beneath the person's heel for non-adjustably registering the shell vertically with respect to the person's leg.
15. A shell as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the forward extent of the shell has a projecting region (52) for covering the person's anterior talofibular ligament.
16. A shell as claimed in claim 15, wherein the projecting region projects by a maximum distance (D) of about 60 mm  $\pm$  10 mm from the tip (54) of the person's ankle bone (30).
- 10 17. An ankle brace (10) comprising a medial shell (12) as claimed in any of claims 1 to 14 for the medial side surface of the person's leg, a lateral shell (14) as claimed in any preceding claim for the lateral side surface of the person's leg, and means (16,20) for adjustably strapping the shells to the person's leg.
- 15 18. An ankle brace as claimed in claim 17, wherein the strapping means includes an adjustable strap (20) for extending under the person's heel (22) between the lower extents of the shells.
19. An ankle brace comprising a sock having at least one shell as claimed in any of claims 1 to 16 fitted to the sock.
20. An ankle brace comprising a shoe or boot having at least one shell as claimed in any of claims 1 to 16 fitted into the shoe or boot.